

THE
EXPOSITOR
AND • HOMILETIC • REVIEW



JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL CHURCH METHODS



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The EXPOSITOR

and HOMILETIC REVIEW

A Journal of Practical Church Methods

What's Happening to Christmas?

Liquor parties, speeding cars, suggestive greeting cards and blatant commercialism — those are fast becoming the symbols of our celebration of one of our holiest days of the year, the anniversary of the birth of Christ. Our Christmas orgies of sex, liquor and smashup, have reached the point where they are a national disgrace, protests an article in the December issue of *Pageant* magazine entitled, "Are We Killing Christmas?"

What has happened to the real spiritual meaning of Christmas? It has dissolved into a vulgar, commercialized celebration that has nothing to do with the origin of the "holiday" which, of course, was once called "holy day." Take Christmas cards as an example. We send cards that are arty, folksy, humorous and even suggestive — but only rarely spiritual. Many of them have no Christmas meaning whatever. They are illustrated with pictures of cocktail shakers, cigarettes, ships, airplanes, dogs and even psychiatrists!

But perhaps the grossest travesty on the spiritual joy that Christmas should mean is the "office party" — sometimes held in homes and taverns too — which disguises drunkenness, vulgarity and even lewdness, as legitimate Christmas jollification. In all too many homes, Christmas Day is not a time of church and family celebration, but a dull, remorseful hang-over of aching or broken skulls. The "observance" of Christmas last year, points out *Pageant*, took 724 lives, 144 more than the previous year.

The holiday street scene in any American city bears out this growing misconception as to the meaning of Christmas. Starting even before Thanksgiving, store windows are jammed with every materialistic luxury that can be bought. In every store a Santa Claus prompts greedy recitations of the bikes, games and toys that children want. But the Manger, concludes the *Pageant* article, is tucked away in the churches and must be deliberately sought out. Are we killing Christmas?

An international magazine of parish administration, methods of church work, practical theology, applied religion and all phases of minister's work.

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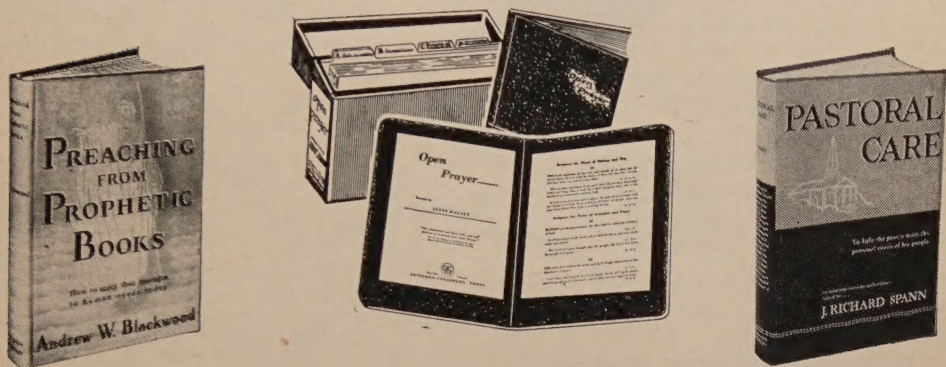
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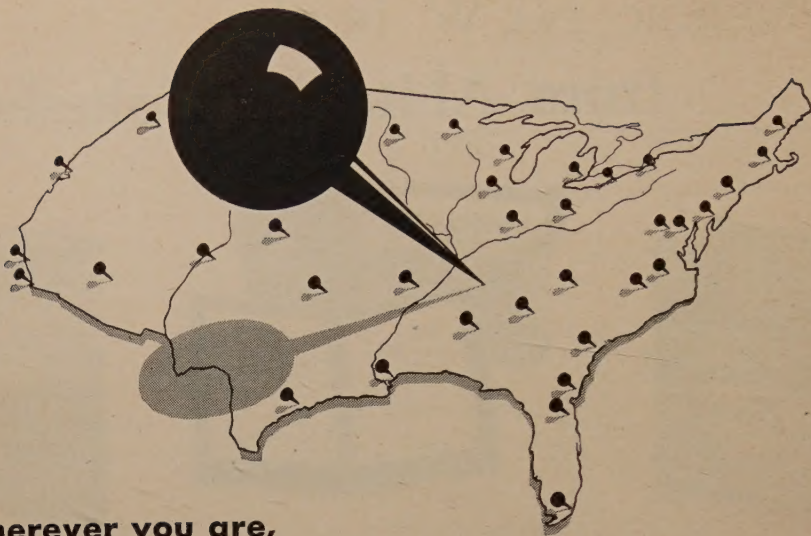
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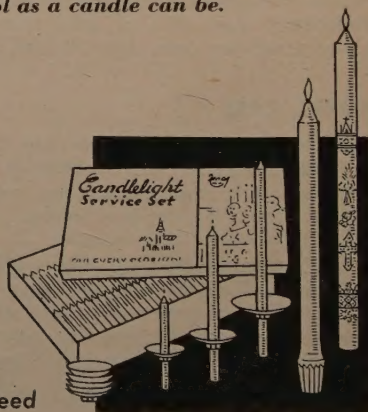
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THE EXALTED ONE

JOHN W. McKELVEY

AS TIME goes in the pursuance of the Christian calendar, it is not far, in the number of days, between Christmas and epiphany. In the actual process of time nineteen centuries ago, there was a span of thirty years between these two events, and yet it is not incongruous for us to see Christ, the Man of Galilee, the Teacher, the Healer, that immediately in the wake of the joy and adoration which we instinctively feel at each anniversary of His nativity. It is not only well but operative that we telescope the so-called "hidden years" that lie between Christ's birth and the beginning of His ministry, and see the transcendent fact so cryptically summarized in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."

I suppose few serious-thinking people today would debate the fact that God was at work in that ancient world, and that "in the fulness of the time" He sent forth His Son. Some might still persist in rattling the dry bones of ancient heresy that Christ was not God, but hardly any one this side of the Iron Curtain has the temerity to deny that Christ did always those things which pleased God, and that "making Himself of no reputation He took upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." To the last breath, there was but one desire on our Saviour's lips, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Notwithstanding all this, I wonder if the trouble with our world is not rooted in the fact that to all practical purposes, we have now relegated God to the sidelines, so much as to say, things have got too complicated for you; please step aside until we get order.

Certainly you saw the wistful story in the papers last year of the young mother holding her four-year-old daughter, while she was trying to decide what to do. Her daughter had cancer of both eyes and the physicians had told the mother that unless her eyes were removed, she would probably die. The young mother cried and said, "I can't answer a thing like that. I keep hoping for a miracle."

Windsor, Pennsylvania

Whether you agree with the parents who finally decided against the operation, saying, "We just can't do it," at least you are driven for help, as they were, to the Unseen God, who is at work in all of life and whether you can understand His inscrutable will or not, you are compelled to reckon with Him as an active and imponderable power.

Whether God met the humble faith of that harassed mother and father and worked a miracle, I do not know. It would not be the first miracle recorded in human experience, nor the greatest. The greatest miracle was that of Christ, born of Mary, exalted of God, and given a name which "is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." This I think is what Harry Webb Farrington was trying to say:

I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the manger Child
Has brought God's life to me.

This, in brief, is the first profound truth to encourage us, as we undertake to follow Christ our Lord into another year. First and foremost, among the reasons why we turn to Him and yield allegiance to His Name is because He has received the seal of God's approval. God has highly exalted Him and set Him down at the right hand of His throne for ever and ever.

Every Tongue Confesses that Jesus Christ Is Lord

This may not be a very cogent reason in a generation of increasing numbers of unbelieving men, but among those who walk life's pilgrimage with one foot in heaven, it is a full and sufficient reason. As far as multitudes of this earth's war-desolated children go, God is the most precious possession they have; in fact, He is all that countless millions of people have left. Undoubtedly they, the homeless, the refugees, the defeated, the DP's, the desperate and the dying, would express their faith differently, but certainly no more sincerely than the little English girl who prayed, at the time when the blitz over London was at its height: "O God,

bless Mary and John, Joan and Michael, and, O God take care of yourself or we shall all be sunk."

Perhaps the utter faith voiced in this little girl's prayer can best be highlighted by contrast with the vaunted remark of the atheist to a convention of atheists, "Thank God, there are more atheists now than ever." For after all, it is not only because God has exalted Christ that we are turning with increasing devotion to confess His Name, but because "every tongue," whether voluntarily or involuntarily, confesses that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

On every hand, more and more earnest and thoughtful men are confessing the Lordship of Christ, in this time of chaos.

There is a growing compunction within the Church to see that the supreme task is not to propagate the Church, but to mediate Christ, to look beyond ourselves for light and purpose, and to give ourselves, not that we may save ourselves, but to save others from despair, discouragement, defeat, and darkness.

As with the Church, so it is with men individually. Increasingly men are squaring up with Christ's call to discipleship and are finding faith wherewith to do the Master's work. W. Russell Maltby has said, "Jesus promised His disciples three things—that they would be entirely fearless, absurdly happy, and they would get into trouble." And strangely enough, it is this third promise which is nothing more nor less than the "power of God unto salvation," and it is this promise which is working right and left, turning the world upside down, righting wrongs, healing all manner of diseases, cleansing the stopped-up channels of the soul, and laying the foundation, other than which cannot be laid, if we are to have a new heaven and a new earth.

And I, If I Be Lifted Up

It is plain to see, therefore, that we are turning more than ever before to contemplate, ponder, and worship Christ, as we push rapidly into the half-century ahead. And we are impelled to hail the power of His holy name, not only because God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name above every name, but also because Christ is what He is, the Light, the Way, the Truth, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Bread, the Life Everlasting. In short, He is all that the prophets prophesied concerning Him and all that the angels sang regarding Him. He is King and Saviour, our Lord and our God. Nothing is truer of Him than what

He, Himself, said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

It is said that Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of the anesthetic properties of chloroform and one of the most prominent scientists of his generation, was asked by a friend to name the most wonderful discovery he had ever made, and quickly he gave answer: "The greatest discovery I ever made was the discovery that I had a Saviour."

It may seem at times, as we look back, that nothing unusual and transcendent took place when men lifted up Christ on a Roman cross; but it is not thus that history records that fact. The strangeness of that fact has baffled the centuries. Now and again we get an inkling as to its mystery. On top of the Methodist skyscraper Church in downtown Chicago, rises one of the highest points in that great city, a glorious Gothic spire crowned by a lofty cross. Dr. Charles B. Goff, the pastor, says that people come and people go in the crowded streets, and never once, has that cross caused panic or consternation in the crowds down below, until one particular day. On this day people suddenly came to a standstill, craning their necks upwards, looking fixedly upon the resplendent temple spire. In a few moments the pavements roundabout were jammed. When the police rushed up to enquire what the matter was, some one pointed to the cross. One of the policemen shouted, "What's wrong with the cross?"

One of the crowd replied: "There's a man on the cross."

Somehow, what happened in Chicago is what happened on Calvary. And somehow what happened on Calvary is the forerunner of what happens in every moment of time and in every corner of existence, when the words of Christ ring clear and dauntless: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

We are entering a New Year. We, with millions of others in this great land and across this broad earth, are humbled by the awesome events taking place around us, no less by the priceless heritage of faith which we solemnly turn to as a mantle in a storm. If there is one thing above all others which holds for us the secret of peace and victory, it is in this united act of commitment to Christ as Lord, this yielding of ourselves, all that we are and have to the superlative discipline of confessing in word and deed that Jesus Christ is Saviour, to the glory of God the Father.



TERESA CLAPS HER HANDS

PAUL WAGNER ROTH

TERESA clapped her hands every time the clock struck the hour because she was in love. "An hour nearer seeing Him," she cried, and clapped her hands.

Santa Teresa was one of the ablest among women. According to so great a judge of such things as William James, "she wrote admirable psychology." According to Alexander Whyte she was practical as well, founding schools, superintending architects and builders, "always in the schoolroom, always in the kitchen, always in the oratory, always on horseback." However, her great name and fame is as a mystic, an adept in all the mysteries of the inner Life. She loved Christ above all else. She was determined that He should not come on her as a thief in the night. "Why tarry the wheels of His chariot? An hour nearer seeing Him," she said and clapped her hands in joyful expectation.

One day, it was in the year of her Lord 1582, her Lover came for her. What joy she had at His coming we shall never know, unless we too, await His Advent in glad anticipation of what it will bring.

What makes you clap your hands? Is it a winning run, or a singer reaching high C without cracking, or is it a new dress, or is it the unexpected arrival of some dear friend? Did you ever clap your hands at the thought of Christ's coming, or does that thought frighten you?

The Church, which is the Bride of Christ that mourns in lonely exile here, now enters the blessed Advent season. The hands of God's clock silently close in on that fateful hour. His chimes ring out the call to prepare the way. "Know ye not the time? For now it is high time to awake out of sleep: now is your salvation nearer than when you first believed."

Meanwhile all the silly little clocks on our walls are chopping our time to pieces. "Wake up, wake up, wake up," they say, "the night

is far spent, the Day is at hand." But who heeds the urgent message of the clocks?

Our forefathers had a hymn which began: "The times are very evil." That refrain is heard again in the land today, with alarming reason. Make your own catalog of the reasons, but be sure to begin with what you find in your own unrepentant, unforgiven, sinful heart. Self-examination will discover nothing there to make you clap your hands for joy. On the contrary, "if we thus examine ourselves we shall find in us nothing but sin and death, from which we can in no wise set ourselves free." "To confess and deplore the sins of others, in or out of the church, is to fall into the trap old Screwtape has laid for self-righteous simpletons."

He is coming! Be very sure of that. Common sense demands that we reckon on the end of our era, the end of the world itself. The great drama of History must have a climax, a denouement, a "Finis." As surely as the promises of His first Advent were fulfilled, so surely shall the prophetic Word about His Second Coming be fulfilled. To those who are not looking for Him it will be the supreme catastrophe,—then will they call on the hills to cover them. To those who have loved His appearing, and are eagerly waiting, it will be the full and final vindication of their faith, the realization of their highest hopes, the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb, the "bliss beyond compare."

Shall we not join good old Richard Baxter and cry aloud, "Hasten, O my Saviour, the time of Thy return. Send forth Thy angels and let that dreadful, joyful trumpet sound. Delay not, lest the living give up their hopes, lest earth grow like hell, and Thy Church be crumbled to dust."

Thy waiting children say "Come!" The desolate Bride saith "Come!" The whole groaning and travailing creation saith "Come!"

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.



On Separations

It occurs to us, as we prepare to move away from the city which has been our home for thirty-one years, that life is largely a series of replacements. This is admittedly not a profound observation, and certainly is not a complete characterization of this mortal sphere, but it is nevertheless a point worth considering. The older we become, the more do we find ourselves saying farewell to other people. Some move away, some grow away, and some die. And as time goes on we become increasingly lonely, as the associations of our early and middle years fall before the inexorable march of time. Once in a while voices are heard in protest against this arrangement, but there is nothing to be done about it, and if we look sharply enough, we are able to see a certain value in it.

For one thing, it teaches us the truth of the apostle's words, "We have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come." The patriarchs were nomads, and the holy writer points out that this was significant, for it indicated that the children of God are never entirely at home in this world, but their "conversation is in heaven." The closest we get to being at home is when we participate in the communion of saints, and there are saints to be found wherever we may hang our hat. Home is not so much a house as a family; and the family of God is everywhere.

Then, too, the system of replacements teaches us to take great care about the quality of replacements. Fresh troops always improve the morale of an army that is weary of fighting; but it is important that these troops be not only fresh but well-trained. It will not do to throw into the battle boys who have come straight from the farm, office, or factory without having undergone any hardening and instructional procedures. This certainly is true of the army of God, and hence the necessity for thorough Christian training in home and school and church. The new generation must be taught to know what life is all about according to the Christian view, and it is the task of the older people to see to this.

Finally, God's arrangement teaches us to distinguish between what is temporal and what is eternal. Among God's people all farewells are temporary; there will one day be a great reunion. Death puts no period at the end of associations in the divine family, but a dash. There will be a knitting together of severed friendships, and partings will be no more. To the enduring fellowship of the great multitude we who are in Christ are privileged to look forward.—
Herbert Lindemann.



LITURGY -- By Margery Ryerson

From all forms of race prejudice,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From meddling in the affairs of other nations more than we would want them to meddle in ours,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From flaunting our riches in the face of a poverty-stricken world,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From taking advantage of our strength to have our own way in the council of nations,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From ever strengthening the bad government of any foreign nation for the advantage it will give to us,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From denying to any people, even on some tiny island, those things which we ourselves value,
Good Lord, deliver us.

And teach us to know that all peoples of the world are proud and have something to give, that they will act their best and we can work together when we treat them as equals and friends.—
Amen.

The Editor's Columns



Invitation

LIKE a melodious tune takes hold of one's mental machinery and goes its lilting way for hours, even days, popping into one's awareness again and again from out of the nowhere, almost to the point of distraction, just so an occasional sentence grabs hold and refuses to let go, as the accumulative force of its self-iteration stabs one into tardy realization of its validity.

"The minister's job is not that of saving souls."

I haven't been able to get away from it. Our job is NOT one of saving souls! Souls have been saved, once and for all. Our task is to gather up the souls which He came to save. Certainly that can't be done through our management of a Church organization. It can't be done by our providing programs and projects for our parishioners, to keep them in maximum contribution of their time, their thought, their effort and their finances. It can't be done by our pulpit presentation of merely good, though often dull directives on virtuous living and social reform nor can it be done by closing our eyes and blindly aiming at nothing, a nothing often hit with high consistency.

All we have to do, all we are obligated to do, all He expects us to do, is to preach Him, and Him exclusively. If we fail to preach Christ, and Christ crucified for our sins, whether it be "popular" or not, of what earthly or heavenly avail is anything else we may do?

Evangelism? Yes, it is evangelism, and the spiritual condition of the Church today is simple affirmation that these other things we preach and do leave much to be desired, much that hungering thousands have at long last located in the evangelistic sects which are capitalizing on our neglect of vital fundamentals.

Evangelism is the Christian Gospel in its simplest, natural, normal outworking. When we toss evangelism into the discard of outmoded church practice, we discard the Gospel, for the two are one.

Evangelism and revival are frequently thought of as identical. Often they are held in ill esteem because of what has appeared

a lack of proper dignity in the technique of so-called, and highly publicized evangelists. Yet neither is something special. Neither can safely be taken or ignored on the basis of whim. Empty pews point to our slothfulness evangelically. Empty hearts to our need of revival, a revival, which must well start in the heart of the minister.

We can't even save our own souls, say nothing of the souls of others. All we can do is to point to that salvation which has already been provided on Golgotha, and we hardly do that unless we preach Jesus and Him crucified. What has become of the one-time evangelistic sermon, which was not satisfied with anything less than a hearer response, Godward?

The church is not an end in itself. It is a means to the Kingdom of God. In this era of utter urgency, when countless souls are unpersuaded, we ministers have something to think about and pray over. Unless we lead souls to the Saviour of souls, our ministry can mean little to Him, to them, or to ourselves.

The highways and byways still wait the sound of our feet and the wayward souls, our specific invitation. "Go ye, therefore."



A Vanishing Breed

ONE cannot return from a whaling expedition without being lost in a hazy inability to comprehend the magnitudinous proportions of the operations he has witnessed, and the tremendous reactions he has experienced. They baffle completely!

You Isaac Waltons may have your record trout on fancy, deftly handled light tackle. Make mine a seventy-ton Leviathan, away out there off the bow, on the far end of a mile of two and a half inch Manila hemp rope! He's so far away you can't see him, but you know he is there, for the 1200 h.p. steam engine in the hold of your 277 ton steel ship has stopped, yet you go sliding along through the restless sea, towed by yon catch. It's inconceivable, yet it is true!

At long last he begins to weary of his load. Huge steel spring shock-absorbers for the "line," slowly relax to prove it. Steam winch engines on deck begin to labor and gasp, uncertain they are equal to the gargantuan task.

Comes a splice to the winch drums, hemp on one side, nylon on the other. There is only fifty fathoms of nylon "foregoer" left to reel in. The battle nears its end.

Then out of the churning, red-tinged sea thirty feet of tail goes skyward, carrying the sea with it. Down it pounds with an explosive sound that would strike fear to your heart if you heard it ashore. The whale has not quit. He sounds, and the "line" blurs around the winch, giving off quantities of blue smoke. Sea water is poured on it to discourage the threatening flame. He surfaces on the piano-wire-taut "line" and "blows" loudly, though the high wind steals away the "spout" almost before it takes shape. From port to starboard he dashes in a white froth of foam, against the dark blue waters. He rushes at the boat. A second exploding harpoon is given him! A third, shortly! Sometimes a fourth or fifth is needed before he quits and rolls over, still. Where else can there be found such vitality, such power? It is the ultimate!

Brought slowly to boat, the carcass is inflated that it may not sink, and the labors of securing its fifteen foot tail-flukes, through hawse-holes in the steel gunwale, is finally completed. The excitement and the action abates and your mind leaps back over the years to that day when men sallied forth in rowed boats of light wood, crept close enough to these unbelievable creatures to throw a small harpoon by hand, played the "line" by hand, and eventually killed their whales with hand spears.

What manner of man, what breed of men were they, with a sufficiency of nerve and of brawn to dare such an undertaking? Yet they did it, even a thousand years ago. Casualties? Yes, and heavy, as anyone who has witnessed the modern method of whaling must easily comprehend. And that casualty rate must have contributed to the extinction of the breed.

Methods, like tree-rings, grow upon methods. The new engulfs the old. The mechanically efficient supplants the inefficient. "Improved methods" provide improved returns. Q.E.D.! Thus we seek, endlessly, and at what a cost!

In that seeking has been sacrificed much of the individuality, the sturdy self-sufficiency, the independence and vitality which marked outstandingly a former generation of men. So long as Methods mean more than mortals, that broad sea will submerge many more than did the whaler's.

Even in the world of the Church, that of which we are wont to boast, "progress," "or-

ganization," "modus operandi," "modernity," has become the restless sea in which lie the submerged forms and strengths of our forebears, or else where is the sturdy midweek prayer meeting? Where the basic individual compulsion to evangelize? Where the one time blessing of the minister's contact with the home and home altar? Where, indeed, the home altar, itself? Where the unexpurgated whole of the Gospel of good news? For what flabby, inefficient insipidities they have been bartered!

Whether it be fishing for men or fishing for whales, the self-same truth abides. Our new ways have wiped out generations of the spiritually inspired. When one contemplates our sacrifice of spiritual stamina, one cannot avoid the question of comparative values. How can methods mean more than men? The individual soul is lost in a confused shuffle. What greater security, even in this our day, than salvation? and salvation is for the individual rather than the organization. Must the Christian go the way of the ancient whaler?



October 1, 1951

Editor Ramsey:

Enclosed find \$3.00 for another year of your most helpful and inspiring "Expositor."

We realize to some extent, the enormous numbers of hours you must spend helping the Clergy! — The Lord knows all about that, and no one, working for Him, works in vain.

Accept our deep thanks for your splendid contribution. Gratefully,

P. & N.B., Connecticut



October 11, 1951

Dear Brother Ramsey:

I will keep volume 53 of *The Expositor* for a while, re-reading some of the articles for my own profit and enjoyment, and then give it to some younger preacher.

We know that the quotation is true — "God buries His workmen but His work goes on!" — and it has been a blessing and pleasure to read *The Expositor* across the years of my ministry. I join with you in praying that young men will be called to take up where we older men must leave off. I pray the Lord to bless you and all whose labors of love and sacrifice have kept *The Expositor* alive for more than a half century. With every good wish,

G.E.L.



October 15, 1951

The Expositor:

In the Minister's Annual, 1929, Joseph McCray Ramsey, Editor, published by you, there is an article "Mother's Day" on pages 178-180. We should like permission to reprint this sermon to children with a few adaptations in our 1952 Stewardship Essay and Poster Contest. May we have the necessary permission immediately, as we are trying to meet a printer's deadline. Thank you for your kindness.

J.W.B.





THE CHURCH AT WORK

Watch-Night Plans

Theme: "Not retrospect, but Prospect!" God has said, "I will make all things new."

(In preparation for this service, candles should be provided for everyone, as the candle is to the Christian the abiding symbol of light and learning. The Christmas season [Christmas through Epiphany] has been highlighted by candles for generations, and we have learned to respond to the warm and friendly glow of candles. More important is the reminder of what Jesus tells us, "I am the Light of the world," and again "Ye are the light of the light of the world." We are only in so far as we accept and live the teachings of Jesus. As far as possible, everyone present should take part in the service, not only through familiar hymns, prayer, but in personal dedication to Him.)

Organ: "Chimes"—Peele.

Hymns: "Peal Out the Watchword"

"Jesus Calls Us . . ."

"Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"

"Hark, Hark, My Soul!"

Psalm: 19, responsively, with leader of young people's group as reader.

Hymns: "Light of the Anxious Heart"

"Sun of My Soul, Thou Saviour Dear"

"Brightest and Best . . ."

New Year Resolution: "From This Day Onward!"

*From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on!*

My food I'll get in serving Thee;
Thy thoughts shall be as eyes to me.
I'll live and breathe to sing Thy praise
From this time onward all my days.
Thy feet I choose, the world resign,
For Thou, from this day on, art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

To Thee I offer child and wife,
My home and all my worldly life;
To Thee this body, too, I bring,
To Thee surrender everything.
My very self henceforth is Thine:
O take it, Lord, for Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

My thoughts and words are all of Thee;
Thou—Wisdom, Joy and Liberty.

Now Thee and me no rift can part,
One not in semblance but in heart,
Set free I am, and for me shine
The joys of heaven, since Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

*From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on!*

—Written by a Marathi, India, Convert,
and quoted in *British Weekly*.

Anthem: "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"
—Ambrose

"Awake, Awake"—Smallwood

Psalm: 18, responsively. (Choose leader in advance.)

Hymns: "Workmen of God, O Lose Not Heart"

"Rise Up, O Men of God"

Reader: "Today and Every Day," John Oxenham

Each man is Captain of his Soul,
And each man his own Crew,
But the Pilot knows the Unknown Seas,
And He will bring us through.

We break new seas today—
Our eager keels quest unaccustomed waters,
And, from the vast uncharted waste in front,
The mystic circles leap,
To greet our prow with mightiest possibilities,
Bringing us—What?

Dread shoals and shifting banks?
And calms and storms?
And clouds and biting gales?
And wreck and loss?
And valiant fighting-times?

And—maybe, death!—and so, the Larger Life!

For should the Pilot deem it best
To cut the voyage short,
He sees beyond the skyline, and
He'll bring us into Port!

Pastor: Luke 11:1-13

(While Scripture is being read, attendant carries large candle from side of chancel to center aisle, just inside chancel railing; lights are turned off at close of Scripture reading, and candle is lighted. Organ softly, "Take my life and let it be . . ." while under the leadership of ushers, everyone marches to chancel to light candles, all sing softly, returning to pews

with lighted candles. Pastor turns toward altar, lifts lighted candle high, and leads worshippers in saying:)

"As we this hour received this sacred and gladsome light, through the love of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, we dedicate ourselves anew to strive through Him and the Holy Spirit to hold this light aloft through the days of this year of grace, for all men to see. In His Name, we purpose so to walk that His light may be seen in our faith and deeds, to His honor and glory!"

Pastor: (Facing altar, offer prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, see next column, and close with benediction.)

Hymn: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!"

Organ: "Marche Romaine"—*Gounod*



Call to Prayer

Loving and eternal Father, in whose presence we are all as one in our littleness and our needs, make us one in humility of heart and dedication to Thee, in order to achieve the grace to seek Thy Will for us as individuals and as members of this church, a body consecrated to serve Thee.

Endow us with the grace and insight to see and know Thee in others with whom we study, work and live; to see Thee and Thy Will in that which we are given to do, or see, or hear, regardless of the dress it may wear. Bestow on us the spirit of kindness, understanding and sympathy toward Thy creatures, so Thy love and plans for all men may be shared with any who deal with us, or attend these services in Thy honor. Teach us the meaning of childlike trust in Thee and Thy Word of Hope and Salvation.

Forgive us, dear Lord, for the many unworthy actions on our part during each hour of the day, in our association with others in business, fellowship or family life, and help us to put aside our arrogance, ill-will and selfishness, so we may rise to the privileges and duties which face us as families, as citizens and as professing believers in Thee, as Creator, Guide and Saviour, to the end that through our weaknesses Thy will may be accomplished among men.

Unite us in love, spirit and determination to accomplish that which none can do alone; set our feet, our hearts and our minds upon the road charted by Thee toward a goal that Thou alone knowest. Let each one of us here pledge our loyalty and determination to be "doers of Thy Word, as well as hearers" through the year upon which we set our feet now, through Thy love and guardianship. Erase from our minds and hearts the many unworthy aspirations to which we have given support in energy, in thought, in time and money, during the past; help us to close that as we do the door to yesterday, and set our sights upon that which is

everlasting and of Thee. We ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.

* * * *

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ephesians 4:1-13

John 17:6-21

I Corinthians 1:10-13, 3:1-7

HYMNS

The Church's One Foundation, *Aurelia*, Samuel J. Stone 1866.

I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord, *St. Thomas*, Timothy Dwight, 1800

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken, *Austrian Hymn*, John Newton 1779.

In Christ There Is No East or West, *St. Peter*, John Oxenham 1908.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds, *Boylston*, John Fawcett, 1782.

God of Grace and God of Glory, *Cum Rhondda*, Harry Emerson Fosdick 1930.

All People That On Earth Do Dwell, *Old Hundredth*, William Kethe 1561.

Through the Night of Dark and Sorrow, *St. Asaph*, Bernhardt S. Ingemann 1825, translated by Sabine Baring Gould 1875.

Rise Up, O Men of God, *Festal Song*, William Piereson Merrill 1911.

Eternal Ruler of the Ceaseless Round, *Unde et Memores*, John W. Chadwick 1864.

America the Beautiful, *Materna*, Katharine Lee Bates 1904.

Onward Christian Soldiers, *St. Gertrude*, Sabine Baring Gould 1865 (*NCUS*, 1950).



Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit

"O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, to guide them into all truth, giving them boldness with fervent zeal to preach the Gospel to all nations, whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of Thee, and Thy Son Jesus Christ; who hast also promised by Thy Son our Saviour to give Thy Holy Spirit to them that ask Him of Thee; I beseech Thee to give Him to me in all the graces and assistances of which I stand in need; I ask Him in all humility and earnestness, as the greatest blessing I can receive. Amen."

—George Hickes (1642-1715), from
"A Pocket Book of Power," Upper Room.



What Prayer Did

Prayer in 1620 safely guided the Mayflower with the Pilgrims to a new world.

Prayer in 1623 saved the Pilgrim Fathers from starvation.

Prayer in 1777 at Valley Forge saved the Continental Army and won the war for American Independence.

Prayer at Philadelphia saved the Constitutional Convention and gave birth to the American Way of Life.

Prayer in 1857 saved America from economic destruction.

Prayer in 1918 ended World War I and lack of prayer started World War II.

Prayer saved England at Dunkirk and myriads of fliers and service men of all nations lost at sea were saved through prayer.

—*Church Chimes, Shreveport, La.*

Memorial Services for War Casualties

Memorial Services for war dead were combined with Flag Dedications in several localities, both the American Flag and the Christian flag. In one instance a Flagpole was dedicated, and the American Flag raised during the service; later it was placed in the position reserved for flags near the Chancel-railing steps. Emphasis on and display of our National Emblem at every gathering should be encouraged to build in our citizenry a sense of responsibility for the exercise of citizenship duties, especially for training of the young, who will reap the harvest of the irresponsible laxness of morals during the last quarter-century.

Processions should include flag-bearers, color guards, boy scout troops, parish and community groups of which the "war casualty" may have been a member, War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Red Cross, candle-bearers, cross-bearer, and pastors.

Films on Missionary Work

Four films in color, with sound track, telling the story of unprecedented evangelistic and scripture distribution campaign launched 2½ years ago in Japan and still in full stride, are available by writing to

The Pocket Testament League
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.

Made at different times during the 2½ years, the films present the movement in Japan from different points of view. Three of the films:

1. Japan Welcomes the Word
2. Japan at the Crossroads
3. Now or Never

the documentary films of the campaign on college and university campuses, and in large cities. The fourth film, "Invading Oriental Night," which like No. 2, was made by Phil Haint, gospel artist and evangelist, pictures the work of evangelistic teams in the mountainous interior regions, off the beaten paths.

Color Film, "The Whole Armor"

The American Bible Society announces the release of a new 20-min. sound motion picture in color, distributed without charge, of interest to families and friends of men and women in military service. Since 1820, the American Bible Society has supplied more than 33-mil-

lion Scripture volumes to U. S. Armed Forces. Address:

American Bible Society
Visual Materials Department
45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

Before-and-After Remodeling

The accompanying photographs are an excellent example of the manner in which an older church interior can be completely transformed by skillful remodeling.



The transformation of the out-dated and somewhat gloomy interior of Edenton Street Methodist Church, Raleigh, N. C., into one of simple and dignified beauty, is the result of effort and skill of Architect A. Hensel Finck, Philadelphia, working with American Seating Company designers and the Church Building Committee. The carvings, chancel furniture, reredos, altar and pews were all executed by American Seating craftsmen.



The figures of the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which decorate the large octagonal pulpit are the work of American Seating's Master Carver Alois Lang.

Good Winter to You

Summer is almost too lavish in her gifts. There is more in a summer's day than we can ever enjoy. Don't sigh over leafless trees—open your eyes to the etched beauty of the penciled branches. I like to see the trees with their clothes taken off.

St. John Ervine tells of the thrill with which in his youth he "suddenly realized one winter morning how beautiful are bare branches of trees. . . . The leaves in spring and summer had hidden them, but now they were plainly visible, and they were lovely. . . ."

So it is in life! There are times of lavish prosperity when we are blind to God, who is everywhere, but only seen by those who have the eyes of their understanding opened.

—C. Irving Benson, Australia.



Don't Talk Too Much

"Selling pots and pans? the need for a raise in salary? or Salvation through Jesus Christ? Human nature never changes," according to Frank W. Lovejoy, sales executive of Socony-Vacuum Oil Co., in giving five *sure-fire* selling rules to a Rotary Club gathering—the benefit of many millions of dollars of mistakes—and here's how the greatest salesmen since the pyramids all have operated:

1. "Don't talk too much. It bewilders the buyers and suggests objections.
2. "Never assume a debater's manner. A buyer can think up arguments faster than you can knock them down.
3. "Keep asking why. Let him think up the reasons.
4. "Be sure the buyer knows you understand his objections. Otherwise he'll keep repeating them stubbornly even after they have been answered.
5. "Stick to one key argument. Remember only 17% of the people in the U.S. have the intelligence of a 14-year-old child."

"Typical sales and shopping patterns," outlined by Mr. Lovejoy:

"Retail stores never should be located next to banks—people who cash checks are determined to hang onto their money . . . for a few steps, at least.

"Women bargain-hunters are partial to a basement on the sunny side of the street. Men prefer crossing to the shady side, and climbing to the second floor. But—when they open the door, 85% of both sexes turn to the right, walk 20 feet, stop and look doubtful. That's when to hit them with your strongest sales argument—their resistance is at its lowest point!

"Even the counter signs have a psychological role to play. They should be red. Next in impressiveness are blue, orange, and purple. If you don't use one of those colors, you might as well take down the sign."

Every minister deals with people, as pastor, preacher and administrator, and will do well to bear in mind the psychology of dealing with people contained in these straightforward "sure-fire selling rules" offered by Mr. Lovejoy.



Quakerism

While acknowledging the value of the Church's heritage in theology, worship, and organization a wistful thought haunts many a Christian mind that something simpler might win and hold the interest of common men in the Gospel. Mr. R. Duncan Fair's Swarthmore Lecture for 1951—*Quakerism: A Faith for Ordinary Men*—(Allen and Unwin; 5s net) is so captivating and persuasive, so pervaded by a sense of spiritual and ethical reality, so sanely extrovert in outlook that it must make the reader ask whether the future of Christianity does not lie with something like Quakerism; but having a militant evangelistic zeal of the Salvation Army or the Apostolic Church. A feeling that this element could be added to Quakerism lies behind the title of this Lecture. The author is concerned about the limited range of its membership in Britain—twenty thousand in fifty millions. Might not the logic of his thought have led him on to urge that Friends should throw themselves more into propagandist effort? They would do this in some wise way of their own from which all might learn, and they might win a greater response.—R. W. Stewart, in *"The Expositor Times," Aberdeen & Edinburgh, August, 1951*



Freedom Under God

A committee of 56 American citizens launched a drive in June of 1951 to "restore the spiritual emphasis of the Fourth of July." The committee includes such men as Gen. Douglas MacArthur and former Pres. Herbert Hoover, and is urging every person in the USA to join in a vocal demonstration symbolizing America's freedom under God.

This is a phase of American citizenship which merits continuous and never-ending effort. Prayerful realization of the gift of Freedom under God, and honest gratitude will in time restore our moral sense, and cause every day citizens to assume responsibility toward maintaining a high moral standard in community life, city, state and national government. This is a channel through which every Christian believer may put faith into active operation.



Seeds for Asia

Ministers who wish to encourage groups in local churches to send garden or vegetable seeds to the Philippines should contact the

Committee for a Free Asia, Inc.
Two Pine Street
San Francisco 11, California



THE PULPIT



THE LONG-SUFFERING GOD

KARL H. A. REST

Text: Gal. 4:4. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son."

OF ALL the Christian virtues, patience seldom carries top honor. We do not like to wait, whether it be in the store, at the crossing, or in the doctor's office. Hard pressed as we are, and despite the rush of modern life, we still cannot escape the necessity of waiting; if it is not one thing, it is something else, and, sometimes, life appears to be a way station in which we simply have to wait for one thing after another. Some wait patiently. Others wait impatiently. But none of us can escape, we must all wait.

Man Waits Upon God

Waiting plays a large role in religion. Some wait on God impatiently. Anxiety makes them fretful and fussy. In a moment of despondency, Thomas Carlyle said, impatiently, "God does nothing, nothing!" Fidgety with anxiety, many a soul in our troubled time cries out despairingly and impatiently, "Why doesn't God do something?"

Others wait on God patiently. If you browse through your Bible, you will note, again and again, the important role which waiting plays in the life of faith. One of the psalmists says, "I waited patiently for the Lord." Another, placing his utmost confidence in God, declares, "On thee do I wait all the day." Looking expectantly to God for His help, a man of faith says ardently, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." A prophet gives the assurance, "Blessed are all they that wait for Him."

The lesson of waiting is also impressed upon us in the great hymns of the church. Trust in God must of a necessity express itself in waiting upon God. In one of our hymns Friedrich Haendel states the dynamic character of the faith

which waits on God:

Wait on God, and trust Him
Through all thy days;
Cast thy cares upon Him
Who guides all thy ways.
Do not despair;
As the morning fair
Scatters fog and darkness,
God removes thy care.
'Midst all thy trials,
In all thy care
God remains
Thy faithful Friend everywhere.

God Must Also Wait

Waiting is not only an element in the life of man. God must also wait! Ordinarily it is the last thought which comes to our mind, that God must wait. We do not think of God's waiting because we think of His power, and power is conceived as strength so overwhelmingly great that no barrier or obstacle can hinder its full and instantaneous expression.

God is all-powerful, we say, and, therefore, we think nothing stands in His way: God speaks and it is done; He wills and it is accomplished; He commands and it is finished. The elemental forces of nature are but the instruments which God uses freely to effect His purposes. Riding on the crest of the storm, God uses thunder as His clarion and lightning as His sword. There are times when God makes Himself known through catastrophic events, heated conflicts, noisy battles and searing crises.

Often, however, God moves slowly, so slowly as to be almost imperceptible. It is as though He must "feel" his way. And there are periods when even God can do nothing but wait. Our text suggests the enforced waiting of God.

Though God had decreed man's redemption from all eternity, He could not accomplish His purpose until the situation was ripe: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son." He could not do it before, though He hungered for man's redemption: God had to wait till the opportune time had come. It

was a period of waiting.

Yet it was not an idle period. God had drawn near to man in many different ways. He sent His messengers. He commissioned His prophets to speak for Him. He made His influence felt, shaping and molding the destiny of men and nations. And when there was nothing further to be done, God waited—waited eagerly. “But when the fullness of time was come” God acted. He spoke decisively and His “Word became flesh.”

The Glory of God's Long-Suffering Patience

The greatness of God is revealed in His waiting. The more we ponder the long-suffering patience of God, the more marvelous it seems. Though God is all-powerful, He could wait. It stimulates no end of wonder. It is the ground for our hope. And, when we remember how impatient we are, the glory of His patience shines all the more brilliantly. Think of Martin Luther. Once, in his rash, impulsive way, he said: “If I were God, and the world had treated me as it has treated Him, I would have kicked the wretched thing to pieces long ago.” No doubt, Luther would have done it. He was impulsive and impatient. He had to see results or he became despairing. But this is the glory of God, He is not like man. God can wait. And how patiently He does wait!

The patience of God is so overwhelmingly great, it seemed well-nigh incomprehensible to the prophets of old. So it was for an Isaiah. It is the theme of his vineyard ballad.

The story of Isaiah begins with the planting of a vineyard by a well-beloved friend. Desiring only the best, he picked out a fruitful slope for the site of his vineyard. How tenderly he cared for it. He removed all the stones and uprooted all the weeds. He prepared the soil by careful cultivation. Only the choicest vines were planted in his vineyard. Then he built a hedge around it and constructed a tower and a wine-press in the midst of it. Having lavished so much tender care and affection upon it, the friend expected great things of his vineyard.

But when the time of harvest drew near, he found no luscious, sweet grapes. To his consternation, he found only wild, bitter grapes. His disappointment was without bounds. He had done everything possible to make his vineyard fruitful, but he was completely frustrated.

What should the planter of the vineyard do now? If something does not produce results, or if an article proves itself worthless, what else can a man do but destroy it? That is just what

the planter of this vineyard did in his great disappointment. He tore down the hedge, knocked down the wall, and laid the whole place waste, leaving it to return to the wild state of nature.

This is more than a story, said Isaiah; it is a parable of God in action. The planter of the vineyard is the Lord. The vineyard is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are His choicest vines. How tenderly the Lord took care of His vineyard, the house of Israel! God led His people out of bondage from the land of Egypt. He stuck with them through the long years of wandering in the wilderness. He saw them settled, finally, in the Promised Land. He expected great things of the children of Israel, but what did He actually find? The Lord, said Isaiah, “looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.”

What could God do with a people like that? Isaiah thought there was only one thing to do. God must do to the house of Israel what the planter did to his vineyard: Destroy it. But this is the glory of God, He can wait. God is not like man; not like an Isaiah who would destroy the vineyard in his fretful impatience, nor like a Luther who would smash a wicked world to pieces in his fidgety impatience. God waits!

How wonderfully great is the long-suffering patience of God. Though His people turn their backs upon Him, He goes after them and waits, patiently, until they turn to Him. That is what He did with the children of Israel. God stuck with them through “thick and thin.” When they were taken captive to Babylon, God followed them into captivity and waited for them. There in captivity, under the heat of affliction, the fruit of His vineyard ripened. The exquisite fruit finds its deepest fulfillment, centuries later, in Jesus. Here in Jesus, the Savior, these words come to life in their deepest meaning: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressor.” The fruit of the Suffering Servant is redemption; it satisfies the deepest hunger of the human soul for completion and fulfillment. But this fruit is not the work of a moment. God had to wait ages for it to ripen, “but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son.”

Do Not Keep God Waiting Longer

How long God has to wait on us! God created man in His image, thereby affording a

point of contact for fellowship between the Creator and His creature. But man has marred that image through sin and has broken it through disobedience. Though the image is broken, it is not lost entirely. A mirror may fall to the ground and break into a thousand tiny fragments. Yet if you pick up a tiny piece of the broken mirror, you discover it still has the capacity to give back a reflection. So also with man. Falling into sin, humanity has broken the image of God into a thousand pieces. Here and there we see a reflection of God in the broken bits of humanity.

And that is how it is also with you and me, is it not? We hardly dare claim that the image of God shines in us and through us in brilliant splendor. There are only traces of that image, and even they are rather blurred, quite pale and dull. But God is not satisfied with that. The sending forth of God's Son into this world has significance not only for the world; it has a personal meaning for you and me. Through Christ, God seeks us, renews His image in us, and saves us. God offers Himself to us in Christ Jesus. How much longer shall we keep Him waiting, before we yield ourselves fully to His redemptive love in Christ?

We are now in the Advent season, a period in the church year in which we prepare ourselves for Christmas. How may we best prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, the Savior? It is by way of penitence. In history John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Christ by his insistent call to repentance. In our time we may best prepare the way for the renewed coming of Christ into our lives by giving heed to that same call of repentance. Only the heart which has become conscious of its sin can perceive fully the glory of the Savior from sin. The self-righteous are so preoccupied with their own goodness they fail to see their need of a Savior and, hence, are spiritually and psychologically unable to receive Christ, the Savior.

Augustine felt the burden of sin weighing heavily upon him and it made his whole life a restless and dissatisfied existence. Then he found Christ who lifted the whole load from his shoulders, giving him peace with God and his own conscience. His whole life was made over by this experience of divine grace, redeeming his life from the frustrations of evil. Sin did not destroy him, though it constantly threatened his existence; sin brought him close to Christ, for it made him conscious of his need of a Savior. "Oh, blessed guilt," cried the redeemed and restored Augustine, "which has

brought me such a Savior!" He was prepared to receive Christ, in his own life, by the way of repentance.

"Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee."



The Glory of Christmas

ARTHUR H. KIRKBY

Text: Luke 2:14—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

THE poet, the grammarian, and the theologian are standing near this text. To each in turn we entrust ourselves, that we may hear all that can be said about the meaning of the verse, and about the glory of Christmas.

It is the poet who speaks first. He tells us to notice the shape and the form. These, of course, are not the most important things, but the form of a statement can emphasize or clarify the meaning. The characteristic forms of Hebrew poetry are seen in this angelic song. There is parallelism, and there is antithesis. God and man are set over against one another. God condescends to man in an attitude of good will. Heaven and earth are set over against one another. There is glory to God in heaven, and there is peace on earth to man. These are not just parallel events but related ones. It is by God's glory, the glory of His love, but there is peace on earth.

The grammarian poses a problem first, and does not begin with an explanation. It is the problem of the best reading among the old Greek manuscripts. One word in particular creates difficulty, the word translated as "good will." Should we take it in the nominative case, as is done by the Authorized Version? Should we follow the Codex Sinaiticus, which gives the word in the genitive? The grammarian has no difficulty in persuading us that we must take the genitive, and translate "of good will."

The verse now reads in a very simple and straightforward manner. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will." We are impressed at once. How simple the message of Christmas is now made.

When this world is filled with men of good will we may be assured of peace. We want to thank the grammarian for this illuminating remark, and pass on to hear what the theologian has to say. But we cannot escape so easily. Like the Ancient Mariner the grammarian fixes with his eye to explain further.

The word "good will" cannot be treated in an easy way like this. It has a history. By careful reference to passages in the Old Testament, to lexicons, and to learned tomes it is shown that the "good will" spoken of in the text is not man's good will to man, but God's good will to man. The text must be translated "Peace among men of (God's) good will, of (God's) good pleasure." When the grammarian has insisted on this point he returns to his manuscripts, and leaves us to the theologian.

The theologian takes up the point that the grammarian has just left. You can never understand the theological and doctrinal significance of Christmas until you grasp this point about God's good will rather than man's good will. The trite platitude that is given publicity every Christmas in sentimental stories and articles is that Christmas is the season when we dwell upon the notion of "peace among men of good will." Of course we cannot expect peace without men of good will, but the problem is to create the good will. The angels did not make a song about a platitude; they sing of the grace of God towards men, a grace that can call forth from them that good will which nothing else can evoke.

The sole justification for the celebration of Christmas is in the theology of Christmas. The Christmas glory is the amazing love of God who will not let men go, who takes the initiative in redeeming them, who visits them in the Person of His Son amid the simplicity of the manger.

Man's good will to man follows from that. In finding God and being found of Him we find one another. A new motive enters our lives, and we begin to be peaceable toward one another. There is no justification for our opinions or our prejudices in the face of the revealed will of God in love in Christ.

The emphasis that is thus made on the supernatural character of Christmas is not one that makes the Christian ignore the very real problems of earth. On the contrary, it is the sentimental notions of Christmas that make people ignore our problems. The theological idea brings man face to face with the most practical issues. The Christian celebrating

Christmas is not an escapist, or a drug-addict, or any other of the rude things the Marxist delights to call him. He is a man facing the realities of our human situation, and seeking to apply to them the unique, personal contribution of the Christian religion.

We are all well aware that the great need of our time is the establishing of peaceable relations between individuals, between classes, and between nations. Thomas a Kempis says: "All men desire peace, but very few desire those things which make for peace." We are content to juggle with the scenery of life, hoping that the play will come right in that way. Laws are devised to try to help; social schemes are introduced to remove inequalities; treaties are drawn up between rival nations. But God is left out of account.

Laws and social schemes and treaties may have their place in the ordering of life, but they are quite ineffective without the personal attitude of trust. What is most required is the power to make men trust one another. The glory of Christmas is that the power is offered by God through His approach in Christ, the approach that breaks down the barriers of sin.

There is a further point that the theologian must make before he lets us go. The good will that God shows at Christmas is not a new attitude to which God has turned. As P. T. Forsyth has said, If God can turn *to* it, He might turn *from* it. What is revealed in the Babe of Bethlehem is the temporal expression of the eternal attitude. As God loves there, so has He loved always, and will love always. Just as a shooting star or a comet which travels through the infinite interstellar space comes for a short time within the orbit of the earth, and shows its brilliance, so the darkness has been lighted by God in these few moments of history, and He has shown that eternal, uncreated love which is His very Nature.

Christmas is an affirmation about the nature of God, and also about the nature of man. Perhaps our greatest problem is to give an adequate answer to the question of the Psalmist, "What is man?" Is he a psychological animal? There are many who seem to teach that with their strange psychological theories of Behaviourism. Is he a unit in the State? There are many who practise that in Communist States, denying any rights to man save the right of obedience to the State. Is man a thing or a person? The question is being answered in political decisions as much as in theological classrooms. The Christmas season

as a time for a renewed declaration of the Christian answer to the question.

There is a worth and a dignity about human nature because God has visited man in redeeming power and love in the Word made flesh. It is Jesus Christ who gives meaning and significance to this strange nature of man.

The theologian who expounds this doctrine to us does not leave the matter thus. He changes into the preacher who wants to win a decision from us. God's mercy manifest in Christ is for *you*. Receive then of His grace so freely given, and by His power, and for His sake be peaceable, loving and merciful to one another.—*The Expository Times*.



Light in the Darkness

AARON N. MECKEL

Text: John 1:5 (Goodspeed).

THERE are many today who curse the darkness! The prophets of doom are having an open season. The daily press, the radio commentators, not a few pulpits, and what is more, the man on the street, tell you what is wrong with the world. From the lush optimism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, we have gone to the other extreme. Men are groveling in such a despair as has not filled the world for centuries. Few seem to be lighting candles of hope. Most are cursing the darkness.

A man came to me at the close of a recent service in this church and asked a question which must be on the minds of many of us. "It doesn't look, does it, as though the Christian vision will ever be fulfilled?" Like many of us, he looked out into a world that seems to deny every value and standard we hold dear. Everything looks black as pitch. What chance has Christianity in such a world?

Well, I wish to administer the corrective embodied in this text of ours. It bears a statement of historical fact, namely, that "the light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out." That has held for almost twenty centuries of history. And as Christians, dare we not say, it never will. Gross darkness has covered the earth at times of crisis. The clouds of despair and of evil have lowered. But the Light that was in Christ has never been overpowered.

No time was ever darker than that in which Jesus was born. The blight of Caesarism was upon the face of things. The proud legions of Rome were treading the hearts of men. "Might was right." Men's hearts cried out for a deliverer from sin, cruelty and abysmal evil at large. Into that world came Jesus, the Light of the world, offering hope and life and salvation to the hungry hearts of men. But even Him they took and nailed to an untimely cross. And having done that, wagged their heads, congratulated themselves on having committed such a crime, and went their way.

Yes, it was a time of darkness. Was, then, the Light Christ brought put out? No. Hardly one hundred years after the crucifixion, John wrote these words of our text: "The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out." When those early disciples, in their grief, sought for His body in the darkness of a tomb, they were told not to seek the living among the dead. "He is not here, He is risen, and He goeth before you!" The Light that was in Jesus Christ, the Lord, shone on!

Move on to the fifth century A.D. The Roman world was falling. On every hand could be heard the crumbling of foundations that were morally decadent. Life, under the pantheon of pagan gods, had become licentious, indolent and cheap. It was a world filled with the darkness of man's misdeeds, and it deserved to perish. And when Alaric and his pagan hordes beat upon the doors of Rome with their battering rams, it fell easily, for there was no moral cement to sustain it. Again darkness was upon the face of the earth. It seemed that it would engulf, completely, the light. But the light that shone on the face and in the heart of Jesus shone on in that dimness.

Come across the intervening years, to the era of Luther and the mighty Reformers. Again the light had grown dim. Worst of all, the skirts of the (Papal) Church were tainted with corruption and impiety. The people had slaved and been exploited in order that imposing cathedrals might be built. The grace of God was openly bartered on the streets to the highest bidder in the degrading system of Medieval "indulgences." But as a saying has it, "When it gets dark enough the stars come out." Over in Bohemia a man named John Huss had given the peasantry the Scriptures. In England Latimer and Ridley were burned at the stake for "opening" the Bible to the people, but not before the one had encouraged the other with the words, "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley;

we shall today kindle such a fire as shall never go out!"

Was this 16th century, then, a time of darkness? Most assuredly. A time of gross darkness and misery for the human spirit. But the darkness could not put out the Light. The Light outshined it! Out of this age of travail and groping came the forces that ushered in our modern democratic age. In that very era the New Testament Church was reborn. "The light shined on in the darkness for the darkness could not put it out."

In time came the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with their accompanying discoveries and the consequent ushering in of an industrial age. The ranks of the common folk were herded into vast slum areas from which they went to labor in the filth and squalor of the factories. It seemed as though the imposing cathedral structures and the established clergy looked upon the plight of the people with indifference and contempt. It was indeed a time of darkness, and the inner candle of the human spirit flickered and seemed in danger of going out.

But in the midst of the darkness, God raised up John Wesley, George Whitefield, William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, and others, to relight the torches of the Spirit and hold them high. To the mine pits, the open fields and to the slums went these Gospel crusaders, thrilling the human heart anew with a sense of its divine worth and infinite destiny. The American countryside rang with the hopeful tones of the circuit riders, who went everywhere, preaching that men should repent and turn anew to God. Men like Moody and Finney were on the scene, penetrating the empty religious formality and deadness of the day with their evangelical fervor and zeal for souls. In the darkness, the light shone! Once again, man's extremity became God's opportunity!

And now, here we are, fetched up before this perilous day in which we live. The evil of Nazism had hardly been laid low before an even greater and more menacing evil, Communism, marched to the fore. In many places of the earth the light seems to have flickered out. In Russia, in certain of the Balkan countries, and most disappointingly of all, in China, the Iron Curtains of a Godless, openly atheistic teaching and way of life are lifted. Men's hearts fail them for fear, while they ask, What has brought us to this impasse? Surely, now, the lights are going out, never to be relighted.

But again, God speaks to us from within His word: "Can you not learn from the lessons of the long centuries?" He is saying to us. "That though the lights may be low, yet the Light never can be overpowered by the hosts of evil." God is shaking the foundations, not obliterating them! No one in his right mind will deny the darkness, spiritual, cultural and political, that is abroad in the earth. It may get even darker and blacker before the clouds lift. One thing we may be certain, however: However vast and oppressive the darkness, it shall never put out the light of our deathless Christian Faith.

That light not only reveals, it is judgment. It lays the finger of God where it is needed. "And this is the judgment," said Jesus, "that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19.) We use a very plain illustration. You don't see the dirt in a room when it is dark. But let the light come, and then you see it, lay hold of a broom, and sweep it out. The light of God lays bare the rubbish that must be swept from the minds and hearts of men and nations, in our day; racial hatred, nationalistic bigotry, the blindness of our statesmanship, the ineffectiveness of much of our religion, our comparative lukewarmness when it comes to the cause of our evangelism and world missions—these constitute accumulated "rubbish"—and must go!

It is within the bosom of the Beloved Community, the Christian Church, that the Christian light and vision must be kept alive. That is the reply I tried to make my friend who had said, "It seems as though Christianity will never come to fulfillment in this world." Not fulfilled in its entirety, No; but kept alive and glowing within the Christian Fellowship, by all means! Once that light of Jesus Christ has flooded in on a man's soul, to the extent that he is done with sin, self-pity and despair, he can say with Walt Whitman,

"My foot hold is tenoned and mortised in granite

And I laugh at what you call dissolution.

And I know the amplitude of time."

When you leave this house of worship today, go out to light a candle, not to curse the darkness! And may these words taken from the heart of the everlasting Gospel sound their refrain in your ears and in your hearts: "The light still shines in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out."

It never has. It never will!

JUNIOR PULPIT

Star of Hope and Promise

(Preparation: Have large, red apple, and knife for cutting. On portable blackboard, or large paper attached to bulletin board, have five-pointed star faintly drawn, with outer and inner points of star marked with crayon dots. At outer points of star, write the words: "Joy, Eternal Life, Salvation, Us, Service." As speaker develops theme, outline star in bold lines, and write words at five points distinctly, and later erase the initial letter of each word, and replace with brightly colored crayon or chalk, which audience will spell out at proper time.)

Today we are looking for God's message to us in a place that few of us had ever thought of; God talks to us in everything we see and handle, if we are only bright enough and willing enough to see and listen.

Here we have an apple! Yes, we are all familiar with apples, their color, shape and flavor, but how many of us know that there is a *Star* at the center of an apple, which has a message for all of us. Now, let's find it, by cutting the apple this way, not along the stem as most of us do, but across the apple. What do we see? We see here the very heart of the story of apples, the seeds of promise which are ready to form new trees, and more apples in a coming day.

Let me draw on this board what the center of the apple tells us. (Outline the star on board.) Let us put some words at the points of the star, and see what it tells us, if we have listening hearts. The first one in *Joy*, which we all feel after realizing what Christmas means. The second one we'll call *Eternal Life*, because that is what Jesus came to bring to all those who will accept it. We'll call the next one *Salvation*, because through Jesus we are saved from sin, if we love Him and accept what He offers us. The next one we'll name *Us*. Jesus came to save each one of *us*, not somebody else, in some other country, or in some other town, but *us*, right here, just as well as all the others who will believe it. Now then, if he brings *us* this good news, and we believe it, we want to do something about it; yes, that's right, we will want to serve Him in every way we can, so we'll call the last point of the star *Service*.

Now watch, so you will know what these words say to us! (Repeat the words at the five points of the star, while you are outlining initial letters in bright color.) What do the first letters of these words say to us? (Holding up the apple halves again.) Most of us will remember the promising star at the center of the everyday apple, from now on, and what the star says to

78
Satan
Save

Mr 12: 41 Jesus s' ov' the last the treasury, 2
 3 as he s' upon the table, and s' lives 2
 4 and he s' up, and did eat, Jesus said, 2
 5 and he s' with the people, and 2
 16: 14 unto the eleven as in a meat, 3
 19 and in the hand of God, 2
 4: 20 again to the minister, and s' down, 2
 5: 3 s' down, and taught the people out 2
 29 of others, and s' down with them, 26
 7: 15 he that was dead s' up, and began 3
 36 house, and s' down to meat, 2
 37 knew that Jesus s' at meat in the 2
 49 And they that s' at meat with him 2
 10: 39 Mary which also s' at Jesus' 2
 11: 3 They went in, and s' down, 2
 14: 1 And he s' down, and s' down, 2
 18: 36 And he s' down, and s' down, 2
 19: 30 tied, whereon n 2
 22: 14 the hour was n 2
 25: 55 Peter s' 2

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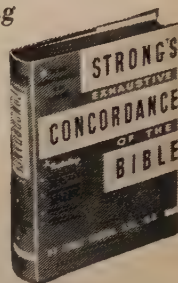
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each of us. But—there is another thing to learn about the star at the center of the apple, where the promising seeds are cuddled away so carefully, the seeds are of no use while hidden away. They are of use only when they are released from the center of the apple, and dropped into good soil, so new trees can grow from them. Just as the apple hides the seeds, so we hide within us great promise for doing what Jesus came to teach us, and what God equipped us to do. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." But the light of faith, hope, love and promise can shine and grow only as we brush away the selfishness and gloom from our minds and hearts. Yes, the Star in the heavens led the Wise Men to the manger where the Infant Jesus lay, but there are equally bright Stars to lead us where HE wants us to go, if we open our eyes to the promise and beauty all about us.



Keeping Tidy!

"While riding on a London bus recently," writes W. J. Doidge, "I was struck by a poster which said, 'Keep Britain Tidy!' 'At first I thought, 'What an idea—to ask *me* to keep Britain tidy!' I find it hard enough to keep things about my place tidy, I can hardly be expected to keep my country tidy."

But, he looked again, and saw that the poster said something more,—it said: "Please help to keep this bus tidy!" That sounded a little more reasonable, since he knew that everyone riding the bus could *stop* throwing paper, bus tickets, and other things on seats, floor, or window sills, or even on the street at bus stops.

Here is a lesson we can all apply to ourselves, in several ways. We can each make up our minds to stop throwing paper, wrappers of candy bars, gum and lollypop sticks on the street, the school yard, the floor, and sidewalks; we can make up our minds to stop throwing refuse from car windows to be picked up by the wind and blown about, littering up the countryside. If those of us here make up our minds to start keeping this town, our own yards, and our own school-yards TIDY, we shall have done something very worthwhile, because others will soon pick up the idea, and carry the idea along, until everyone will be trying to keep things in our town tidy!

But there is something more important for us to think about in keeping things tidy, and that is our conversation, our thinking, and our habits. How would we go about this? Listen, we can stop using bad language, name calling, telling lies about things we do and hear. We

can stop thinking bad things about our companions, our teachers and other people with whom we come in contact. We can stop bad habits, such as sneaking off to do what we want to do, instead of what we should do.

There are several things about all this we need to think about RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW! The earlier we start this plan of keeping things Tidy about us, our conversation, our thinking, and our habits, the *easier* it will be for us, and as we grow older we shall be the kind of people that Jesus teaches us to be, because we shall have formed the habit of doing things as we should do them, and shall talk and think and act the way good citizens and good Christians should.

Something more about this that is very, very important, that is, that each one of us *helps others to learn HOW to keep TIDY* in talking, thinking and acting. If we use good, clean words, stop saying bad things to or about others, telling lies to teachers, parents, our companions will soon follow our example. If you do kind things, to help others, instead of base things which you cannot talk about before people you like, you will find that others' about you will do the same thing. If you DO the things you are taught to do, or asked to do, in the best and quickest way you can, others will go right along with you. After a time, you will have made a habit of all this, so that anyone who knows you, from your own parents, brothers, sisters, playmates, teachers — any one who thinks of you or your name will know without doubt that you are the kind of person who will not stoop to do mean and untidy things. Instead, everyone, including yourself, will know that you keep your life *Tidy* as a matter of habit. You will have won most of the battle that will ever confront you in this life.

When Moses was teaching his people what to do, and how to do it, so they would be the kind of people God wanted them to be, he said—

"Hear, O Israel, the laws and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that he may learn them, and *keep and do them*. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb — not with our fathers, but with us, *even us*, who are *all of us here alive this day*. The Lord talked with you face to face . . ." (Deut. 5:1-5)

That is what God is saying to us today, not only through Moses, but through every thing we learn at home about God, everything we learn in Church and Sunday School. God not only wants us to learn all this, and make a habit of doing as he wants us to do, but he wants us to teach others to do it, and make a habit of it.

ILLUSTRATIONS

JOHN H. JOHANSEN

Christ In The Heart

Text: Eph. 3:17—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith . . ."

In a near-by city there is an apartment building which was inhabited by well-to-do people. The property was sold and the new owners served notice to the tenants that they would have to move out; for the building was to be used for another purpose. The tenants were given a reasonably long period to move out, and little, if any, effort was made to press the issue of their leaving. Some of the occupants apparently realized this, and took advantage of the owners, with the result that several years after the building had been sold, some of the old tenants had not left the building. It can be said, therefore, that the new owners actually own the apartment house, but they do not fully occupy it. The building belongs to the new owners but they do not possess it, since all of the former occupants have not moved out.

What a picture this is of some Christian people; they have been bought by the Lord Jesus through His sacrifice on the Cross. But they have not yet moved on to let the new owner make His home in their hearts. This is what Paul was speaking of in this verse from Ephesians; this was the desire of his heart; that the Christian might move out and let Christ take up His dwelling in our lives.

"Into my heart, Into my heart,
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus;
Come in today, come in to stay,
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus."



Safe At The Cross

Text: Rom. 5:11—"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement."

A little girl was lost one time on the streets of the great city of London. The police found her and tried to help her, but she couldn't remember her address. "Do you live near Westminster?" they asked her, but she didn't recognize the name. "Do you live near the House of Parliament?" they said, and she said, "No." "Do you live near Nelson's Statue?" she was asked, but she knew nothing about that. And so they kept asking her about different places of note, but she did not remember

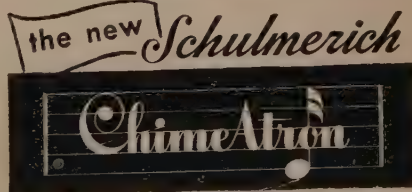
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any of them. Finally, they thought of Charing's Cross, where the great Stone Cross stands. "Do you live near the Great Cross, my child?" they asked her, and the little tear-stained face lighted up and she said, "Oh, yes! Take me to the Cross. I can get home from there."



Examples Are Important

Text: Matt. 5:14—"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is on an hill cannot be hid."

Douglas S. Freeman, noted biographer of General Robert E. Lee, tells that once on a snowy day the General went walking with his son, Custis. Lee soon noticed that his son was doing his best to walk in his father's tracks in the snow. Commenting on this event, Freeman writes: "Lee told one of his

friends long afterwards, 'When I saw this, I said to myself: it behooves me to walk very straight when this fellow is already following my tracks.'"

Examples are always more impressive and important than words. Every Christian worthy of the name must not only tell the world about Jesus, but also show forth His life and character in his own.



Marked As A Saint

Text: Matt. 16:24—"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Some years ago, on one of his American tours, Toyohiko Kagawa spoke in the chapel at Princeton University. After the address a student was walking from the chapel with an older friend. Both were quiet for a while and then the younger student remarked: "I had heard so much about Kagawa. After hearing him today, I am a bit disappointed. He didn't seem to say much." The two walked along in silence for a short distance and then the student spoke up again and said, "I noticed as he read the New Testament that he held the pages close to his eyes."

The older friend then asked, "Do you know why he held the page so close to his eyes? Some years ago, when Kagawa was living in the slums of Kobe, a beggar from the street asked him for shelter for the night. Kagawa let him stay that night in his shack, and caught a disease of the eyes, trachoma, from the stranger; this disease almost blinded him. That is why he holds the printed word so close to his eyes." After a few quiet moments the student replied: "Well, I guess a man doesn't need to say a great deal when he's hanging on a cross."

Our world needs nothing more than a demonstration of the fact that the cross is real, for as Emerson once said, "what you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you are saying."



Stars In My Crown

Text: Luke 10:20—"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Some years ago the New York Fire Department had a great parade. One feature of the parade was the presence in the line of march of three buses loaded with people from all walks of life—from a judge, to a little boy from the slums. And on each of the buses

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was this sign: "All of these were saved by our Fire Department from Burning Buildings." When the Apostle Paul came to the end of his days and looked back over his course he saw multitudes who had been saved from sin and death because of the work he had done for Christ. When you come to the end of the way, will anyone be able to say, "I am a Christian because of you?" Will you have any trophies to lay at his feet? As the popular gospel hymn puts it:

"Will there be any stars, any stars in my crown,
When at evening the sun goeth down?
When I wake with the blest in the mansions of rest,
Will there be any stars in my crown?"



Sixty Seconds

Text: I Cor. 15:52—"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

Mark: 13:36—"Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping."

II Cor.: 6:2—"Behold, now is the accepted time."

The giant airplane was on fire. It had been making circles over its home field for over twenty minutes before this happened. The crew were making final training runs, and at the day's end some would see their training finished. But fire had now taken over, and an unexpected element had entered the scene.

But why worry about it? The crew had skilled members in it. The field was close by. It had been repeated many times that given nine or ten minutes, any such airplane could land safely. Here was this one, just sixty seconds from the landing strip, just a minute away from the field. And on the field were skilled firefighters and the best of equipment to fight such fires. In just sixty seconds they would be on the field, the fire would be quickly extinguished, and the six men in the ship would be saved. The plane was headed directly for one of the landing strips. One minute—sixty seconds—and all would be well.

Then it dropped into a field. Two men were thrown clear, both going to hospitals where one died. Four were burned to a crisp as the plane was quickly turned into ashes.

Yes, several fire companies responded, but water was far away. The trained crew and the equipment for such fires was at the airfield, sixty seconds away, flying time. But tragedy reached around the world that day—tragedy, sorrow, death, and sixty seconds.

Many lives and souls have been lost because of a matter of sixty seconds. Many have said



"The Vogue of the Vague" never ceases to cause wonder. That which cannot be understood acquires, for some, a special virtue. George Ades' fable comes to mind in which he tells of a minister who felt he needed a larger salary. So he preached a sermon replete with unintelligible words. Immediately an awed congregation raised his stipend.

Belief gets confused with credulity when it is assumed that one must believe what he cannot see clearly at once, but which a little effort would make plain. Faith in what cannot be seen is reasonable. Acceptance without examination of ideas that can be understood is something else.

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to their later sorrow, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And the one of whom Jesus said: "This night shall thy soul be required of thee," was not the last of whom that was said.

Sixty seconds from safety! An eternity can be wrapped up in sixty seconds.—*W. R. Siegart.*



Heavenly Citizenship

Text: Phil. 3:20—"But we are a colony of heaven, and we wait for the Saviour who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Moffatt)

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On very ancient Spanish coins there was a picture of the Straits of Gibraltar. Underneath the picture were these Latin words, "Ne plus ultra," "there is nothing beyond." That is what people believed in those olden days. They thought there was nothing beyond the Straits but the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Then came Columbus, who sailed through the Straits, to discover the new world beyond. The inscription on the coins was then altered: the little word "Ne" was omitted, and it then read "Plus ultra," "There is more beyond."

The heavenly country is the Christian's "Plus ultra"—"the more beyond." All his confidence and consolation in this life are based upon the assurance that his Master has opened up for him a new world, which can be discovered by every true follower, who believes on His Name.



Marred for a Purpose

High on a scaffold, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the famous English portrait painter, had finished the picture on which he was working in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. As he made his last brush stroke his arms relaxed, and an expression of satisfaction slowly passed over his face. He seemed to radiate that pleasure, joy and satisfaction which only a true artist can feel when he knows he has done a good work which will lift men's souls to God.

Some friends had come to watch him finish this painting. As Reynolds stood, admiring his work, he started stepping backward on the scaffold. With his eyes and mind fixed on the painting, he gradually approached the edge. One more step and he would plunge to his death. His friends became excited, but feared that if they would call to him it would be disastrous. One of them suddenly picked up a brush, dipped it in paint, and threw it past Reynolds's head, hitting the painting in the middle, marring what was to be an art treasure.

Sir Joshua Reynolds did what his friends expected he would do, step forward to his painting, and in that act his life was saved. When the deed was explained to him he cleansed and refinished his painting with a prayer of thankfulness for his bodily salvation.

Sometimes God calls us to attention like that. Overcome by our own desires, admiring the work of our hands or some other achievement, and being overcome by what we have done, so that we forget other important things, God may mar our work for our own good. Do we always look for the meaning and purpose of God and try to adjust ourselves thereto?—*W. R. Siegart.*

BOOKS

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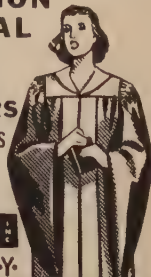
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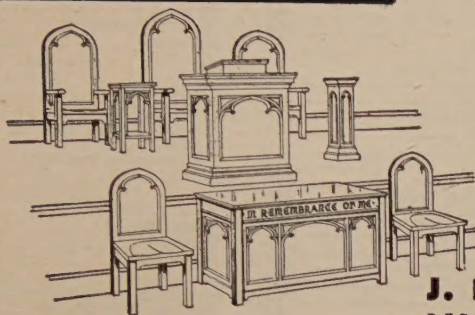
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Shadow and Substance

Few Scripture passages have been more often misunderstood or more flagrantly misinterpreted than Paul's dictum to Titus, that Christians should constitute a "peculiar people," coupled with his exhortation to the Corinthians to "come out from among them and be ye separate." They have been made the excuse for all sorts of bizarre beliefs and practices. In trying to implement them, Christian disciples have sought monastic life as a refuge from a sinful world; have refused to join "worldly" organizations and have insisted upon dressing and talking differently from other people. The more than two hundred varieties of Protestant Christianity in the United States, are a melancholy monument to the "come-outism" mistakenly deduced from them.

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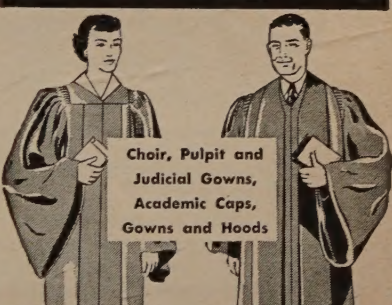


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